



IN THE SHADOW OF NO TOWERS

art spiegelman



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In connection with to-night's developments it is explained that opening of the outer wound did not affect the two interior wounds, front and one in back, from which the President is suffering. The wounds, it was added, are healing nicely.



clogged drain, running late for an appointment—send me into a sky-is-falling tizzy. It's a trait that can leave one ill-equipped for coping with the sky when it actually falls. Before 9/11 my traumas were all more or less self-inflicted, but outrunning the toxic cloud that had moments before been the north tower of the World Trade Center left me reeling on that faultline where World History and Personal History collide—the intersection my parents, Auschwitz survivors, had warned me about when they taught me to always keep my bags packed.

It took a long time to put the burning towers behind me. Personal history aside, hip codes seemed to have something to do with the intensity of response. Long after uptown New Yorkers resumed their daily jogging in Central Park, those of us living in Lower Manhattan found our neighborhood transformed into one of those suburban gated communities as we flashed IDs at the police barriers on 14th Street before being allowed to walk home. Only when I traveled to a university in the Midwest in early October

did I realize that all New Yorkers were out of their minds compared to those for whom the attack was an abstraction. The assault on the Pentagon confirmed that the carnage in New York City was indeed an attack on America, not one more skirmish on foreign soil. Still, the small town I visited in Indiana—draped in garlands that reminded me of the garlic one might put on a door to ward off vampires—was at least as worked up over a frat house's zoning violations as with threats from "raghead terrorists." It was as if I'd wandered into an inverted version of Saul Steinberg's famous map of America seen from Ninth Avenue, where the known world ends at the Hudson; in Indiana everything east of the Alleghenies was very, very far away.

One of my near-death realizations as the dust first settled on Canal Street was the depth of my affection for the chaotic neighborhood that I can honestly call home. Allegiance to this melted nugget in the melting pot is as close as I comfortably get to patriotism. I wasn't able to imagine myself leaving my home for safety in, say, the south of France, then opening my *Franklin Tribune* at some café to read that New York City had been turned into radioactive rubble. The realization that I'm usually a "rooted" cosmopolitan is referred to in the fourth of *No Towers* comix pages that follow, but the unstated phantasy that underlies all the pages is only implied: I made a bet that morning to return to making comix full-time despite the fact that comix can be so damn labor intensive that one has to assume that one will live forever to make them.



had happened that would have done a Frenchman proud. (My susceptibility for conspiracy goes back a long ways but had reached its previous peak after the 2000 elections.) Only when I heard paranoid Arab Americans blaming it all on the Jews did I reel myself back in, deciding it wasn't essential to know precisely how much my "leaders" knew about the hijackings in advance—it was sufficient that they immediately instrumentalized the attack for their own agenda. While I was going off the deep end in my studio, my wife, Françoise, was out impersonating Joan of Arc—finding temporary shelter for Tribeca friends who'd been rendered homeless, sneaking into the cordoned-off areas to bring water to rescue workers and even, as art editor of *The New Yorker*, managing to wrest a cover image from me, a black-on-black afterimage of the towers published six days after the attack.

I'd spent much of the decade before the millennium trying to avoid making comix, but from some time in 2002 till September 2003 I devoted myself to what became a series of ten large-scale pages about September 11 and its aftermath. It was originally going to be a weekly series, but many of the pages took me at least five weeks to complete, so I missed even my monthly deadlines. (How did the newspaper cartoonists of the early twentieth century manage it? Was there amphetamine in Hearst's water coolers?) I'd gotten used to channeling my modest skills into writing essays and drawing covers for *The New Yorker*. Like some farmer being paid to not grow wheat, I reaped the greater rewards that came from letting my aptitude for combining the two disciplines lie fallow.

A restlessness with *The New Yorker* that predated 9/11 grew as the magazine settled back down long before I could. I wanted to make comix—after all, disaster is my muse!—but the magazine's complacent tone didn't seem conducive to communicating hysterical fear and panic. At the beginning of 2002, while I was still taking notes toward a strip, I got a fortuitous offer to do a series of pages on any topic I liked from my friend Michael Naumann, who had recently become the editor and publisher of Germany's weekly broadsheet newspaper, *Die Zeit*. It allowed me to retain my rights in other languages and came complete with a promise of no editorial interference—an offer no cartoonist in his right mind could refuse. Even one in his wrong mind.

The giant scale of the color newsprint pages seemed perfect for oversized skyscrapers and outsized events, and the idea of

conviction that I might not live long enough to see them published. I wanted to sort out the fragments of what I'd experienced from the media images that threatened to engulf what I actually saw, and the collagelike nature of a newspaper page encouraged my impulse to juxtapose my fragmentary thoughts in different styles.

The pivotal image from my 9/11 morning—one that didn't get photographed or videotaped into public memory but still remains burned onto the inside of my eyelids several years later—was the image of the looming north tower's glowing bones just before it vaporized. I repeatedly tried to paint this with humiliating results but eventually came close to capturing the vision of disintegration digitally on my computer. I managed to place some sequences of my most vivid memories around that central image but never got to draw others.

I'd hoped to draw the harrowing drive through a panicked city to retrieve our then-nine-year-old son, Dash, from the United Nations School that we thought a likely target that morning and, once we were all reunited, my breaking down in tears that shook my kids up far more than the events that precipitated my sobs.

I intended to do a sequence about my daughter, Nadja, being told to dress in red, white and blue on her first day at the Brooklyn high school she was transferred to while her school in Ground Zero was being used as a triage center. I forbade her to go, ranting that I hadn't raised my daughter to become a goddamn flag; she placated me by explaining she had the perfect jumper for the occasion.

I planned a "terror sex" sequence about the rumors of women patriotically rushing into the wreckage to give comfort to rescue workers at night and noted one Tribeca bachelor friend's wistful observation that those first days were "a really great time for picking up girls." (I responded that I couldn't imagine anything more detumescent than those two 110-story towers collapsing.)

I had anticipated that the shadows of the towers might fade while I was slowly sorting through my grief and putting it into boxes. I hadn't anticipated that the hijackings of September 11 would themselves be hijacked by the Bush cabal that reduced it all to a war recruitment poster. At first, Ground Zero had marked a Year Zero as well. Idealistic peace signs and flower shrines briefly flourished at Union Square, the checkpoint between lower Manhattan and the rest of the city. That was all washed away by the rains and the police as the world hustled forward into our "New Normal." When the government began to move into full dystopian Big Brother mode and hurtle America into a colonialist adventure in Iraq—while doing very little to make America genuinely safer beyond confiscating nail clippers at airports—all the rage I'd suppressed after the 2000 election, all the paranoia I'd barely managed to squelch immediately after 9/11, returned with a vengeance. New traumas began competing with still-fresh wounds and the nature of my project began to mutate.

respond to transient events while they're happening. (It took me 13 years to grapple with World War II in *Maus*!) Besides, nothing has a shorter shelf-life than angry caricatures of politicians, and I'd often harbored notions of working for posterity— notions that seemed absurd after being reminded how ephemeral even skyscrapers and democratic institutions are.

As the series got rolling I found my own "coalition of the willing" to publish it along with *Die Zeit*. Most of the distinguished newspapers and magazines that found a way to accommodate the large format, quirky content and erratic schedule were in the "old Europe"—France, Italy, the Netherlands, England—where my political views hardly seemed extreme. The concept of an overtly partisan press has a lot to recommend it. In America, my reception was decidedly less enthusiastic. Outside the left-leaning alternative press, mainstream publications that had actively solicited work from me (including the *New York Review of Books* and the *New York Times* as well as *The New Yorker*) fled when I offered these pages or excerpts from the series. Only the weekly *Forward*, a small-circulation English-language vestige of the once-proud daily Yiddish broadsheet, enlisted and ran them all prominently. I pointed out to the *Forward*'s editor that my pages, unlike the *Maus* pages that they'd once serialized, wouldn't have much specifically Jewish content. Offering me the Right of Return, he shrugged and said, "It's okay—you're Jewish."

The climate of discourse in America shifted dramatically just as I concluded the series. What was once unsayable now began to appear outside the marginalized alternative press and late-night cable comedy shows. A profile of me in the Arts section of the *New York Times* in the fall of 2003 even included the very panel of me feeling "equally terrorized" by al-Qaeda and by my own government that had made some editors visibly shudder two years earlier. *Sigh!* It's hard to be an artist who's consistently Seconds Ahead of His Time.

What changed? Basically, America entered its pre-election political season. Free debate is expected as proof of Democracy in action. And though it has been an enormous relief to hear urgent issues get an airing again, I was disappointed that vigorous criticism had been staved off until it could be contained as part of our business as usual. The feelings of dislocation reflected in these *No Towers* pages arose in part from the lack of outcry against the outrages while they were being committed.

Still, time keeps flying and even the New Normal gets old. My strips are now a slow-motion diary of what I experienced while seeking some provisional equanimity—though three years later I'm still ready to lose it all at the mere drop of a hat or a dirty bomb. I still believe the world is ending, but I concede that it seems to be ending more slowly than I once thought . . . so I figured I'd make a book.

art spiegelman nyc, Feb 16, 2004

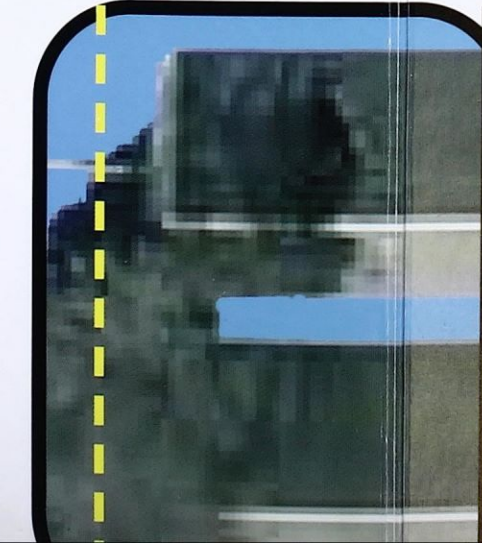




**SYNOPSIS:**  
In our last episode, as you might remember, the world ended...

# IN THE SHADOW OF NO TOWER

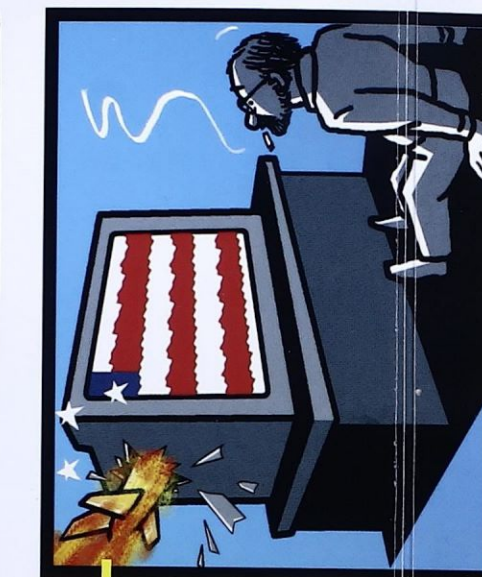
REVEALED: 19TH CENTURY SOURCE FOR 21ST CENTURY'S DOMINANT METAPHOR!



Se crumbling towers burned their into every brain, but I live the outskirts of Ground Zero I first saw it all live—unmediated.



Maybe it's just a question of scale. Even on a large TV, the towers aren't much bigger than, say, Dan Rather's head...



Logos, on the other hand, look enormous on television; it's a medium almost as well suited as comics for dealing in abstractions.



Still see the glowing tower, *Awesome* as collapses—



**NEW! IMPROVED!**  
**JIHAD**  
BRAND FOOTWEAR®  
All manmade materials.  
(Extra-large sizes only.)  
Available in finer shops near you!

was sure we were going to die! I've always *sorta* suspected it, but that morning really convinced me."

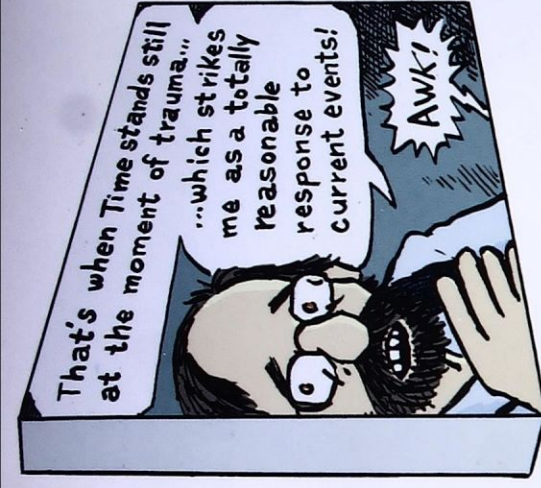
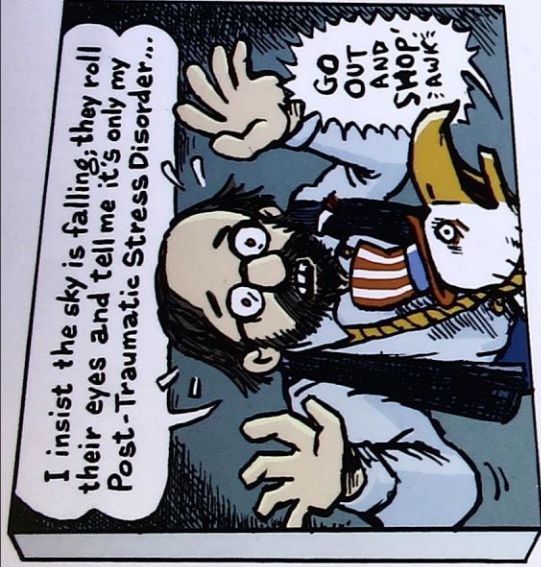
My wife, my daughter are rushing from the site. We hear a roar waterfall, and look at The air smells of de

Many mont passed. It's move on... I'm finally up September

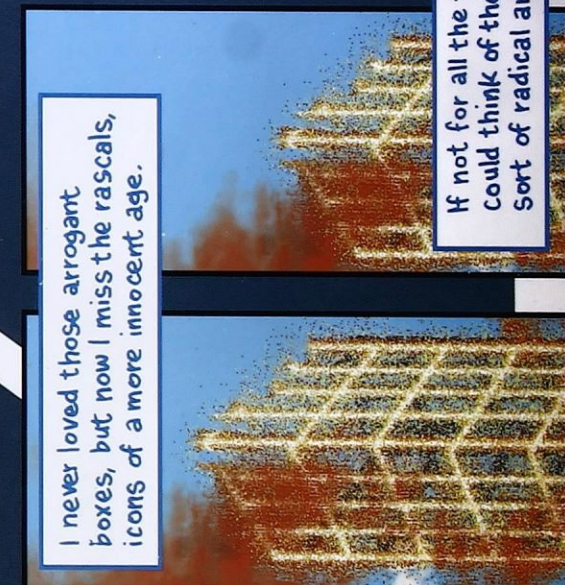
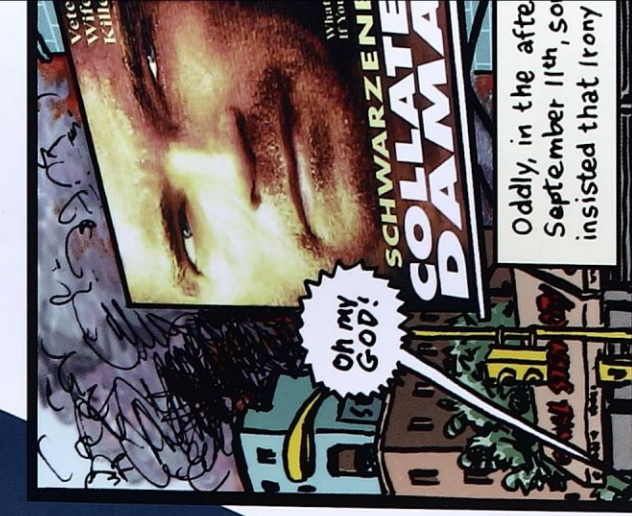
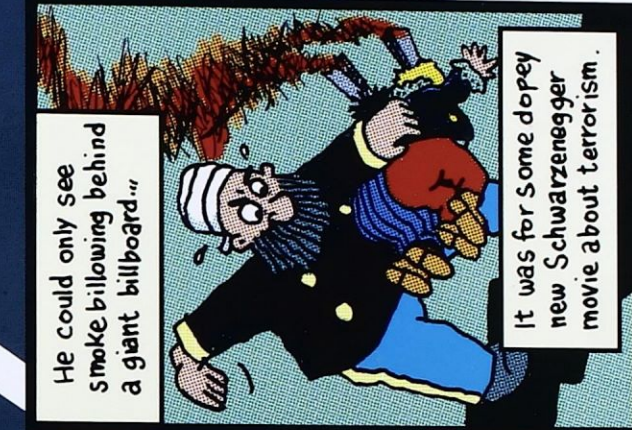
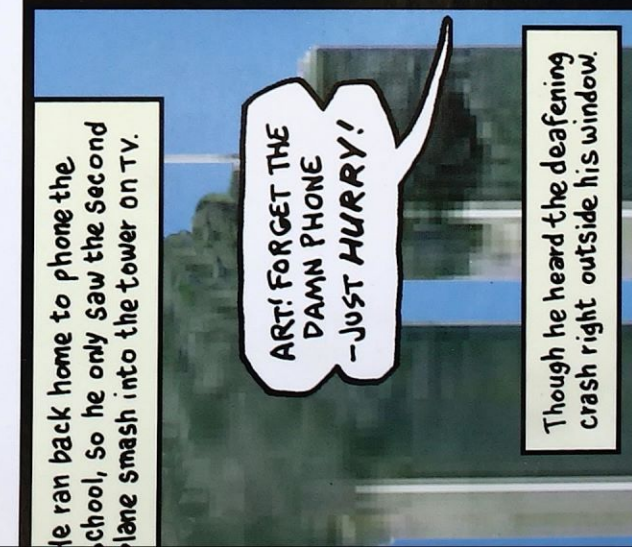
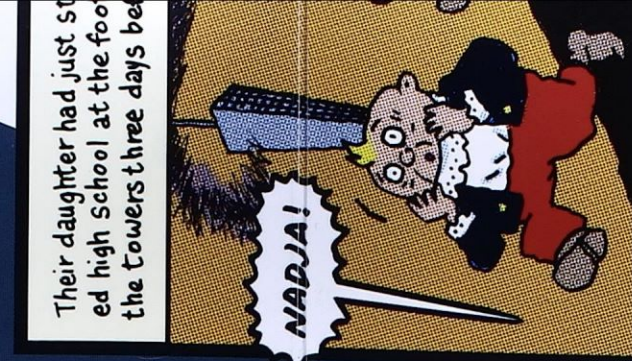
Okay! Let's say it's September anymore...  
I'm hunched drawing table Lower Manhattan studio, with tightly cross

...It's hard to hold a pen this way...  
...but I'd feel like jerk if a new disaster strikes while I'm sitting away at the





# IN THE SHADOW OF NO TOWER





**SYNOPSIS:**  
In our last episode, as you might remember, Time stood still. (And maybe it's just as well: last week the artist began describing his September morning with morning and only got up to about 9:15... Consider- ing that it takes him at least a month to complete each page, he should've started this "weekly" series in September 1999 to get it all told by Judgment Day...)

They raced to their daughter's school. His 2-pack-a-day habit wasn't great training for this sort of thing...

Towers in flames four blocks south.

NADJA!

NADJA! 23VY!

SHE'S HYSTERICAL! LET HER IN TILL SHE QUIETS DOWN.

COFF

I remember my father trying to describe what the smoke in Auschwitz smelled like.

...The closest he got was telling me it was "indescribable."

After the attack, Nadja's school became a rescue center. The kids were sent to another school.

Some parents were upset that their kids would miss some college prep classes! ...We were thrilled our kid was away from Ground Zero.

Asbestos, PCBs, lead, dioxins, and body parts...

Lower Manhattan's air is a witch's brew that makes Love Canal seem like a health spa.

THERE ARE 3,000 KIDS IN HERE. WE'LL FIND YOUR DAUGHTER AND BRING HER DOWN!

NADJA?

They were the only parents allowed inside. Hysteria has its uses...

They couldn't see the maelstrom outside, but they could hear the guard's radio...

UN AEROPLANO ACABA DE ESTRELLARSE EN EL PENTAGONO!

HUH??  
WH-WHAT ARE THEY SAYING?

THEY SAYING A PLANE JUST BOMB INTO THE PENTAGON.

NADJA?

**WASHINGTON IN FLAMES**  
When I was Nadja's age, in 1962, I loved those Mars Attacks cards published by TOPPS GUM, INC. Funny how things turn out. I worked for Topps for 20 years, from the time I finished high school till Nadja was born.

He figured the Martians had invaded, that Paris was burning and Moscow was vaporized. His wife stayed more focused.

ATTENTION!...

NAD-

WAIT! THE PRINCIPAL IS FINALLY MAKING AN ANNOUNCEMENT!

It was hard for puny human brains to assimilate genuinely new information... and it remains just as hard now, these many months later...

**NYC TO KIDS:  
DON'T BREATHE!**

I even designed a poster... but some parent's protested my poster for being too shrill.

Our government has been lying about the air quality, of course.

It's back to business as usual...but what can they do, evacuate the city for a generation?

They never even cleaned the air ducts at Nadja's school, so I helped set up a protest at City Hall...

I didn't want Nadja to go back to that school, but she loves it there and says I'm just paranoid!

I am of course...and all this has gotten me so anxious I smoke more than ever now.

...I'm not even sure I'll live long enough for cigarettes to kill me. :cof:cof:~



A political cartoon by David Coverly. A large, dark-feathered eagle is shown from the chest up, its wings spread wide. It has a speech bubble coming from its beak that reads "WHY DO THEY HATE US? WHY??". The eagle is carrying a man in a blue suit and glasses in its talons. The man is looking down with a distressed expression, holding a small object in his hand. In the background, another man in a red suit is visible, looking on. The cartoon is signed "Coverly" in the bottom right corner.

In mere moments their quiet Soho street was **FILLED** with *paparazzi*. And camera crews remained on their corner, at the perimeter of Ground Zero, for days after...

WOW! I OUGHTA  
RUN HOME AND  
GET OUR CAMERA!

NAH! THERE'LL BE  
LOTS'A PHOTOG-

RAPHERS!

Power Comes the aide has screaming.

Lobby waiting for its

half hour in the way and named  
a school to find Nadia, a girl named  
the 3000 students, a girl named  
NADIA is brought to us!!!

ing past their windows. Some have  
ants who work at the towers.

...a roar, we turn  
of the tower glow a  
sky. Ever-so slowly  
it's all, awesome

They walked toward their loft...

Y'KNOW HOW I'VE CALLED MYSELF  
A "ROOTLESS COSMOPOLITAN,"  
EQUALLY HOMELESS ANYWHERE ON

—

Though he'd never own an "I ♥ NY" t-shirt, he had a pang of affection for his familiar, vulnerable streets.

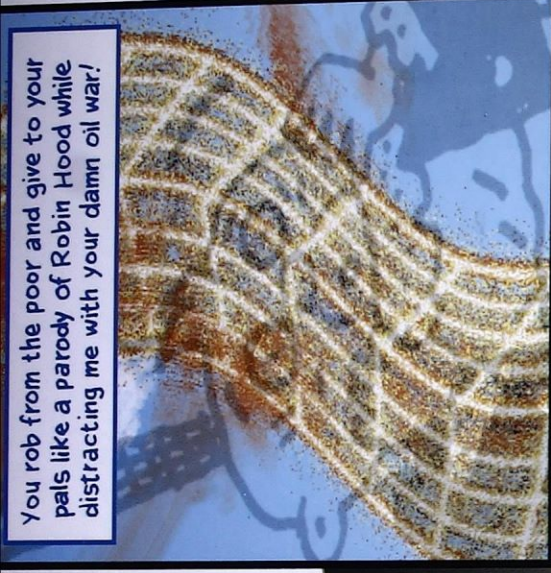
1. *Introduction*



Leave me alone, Damn it! I'm just trying to comfortably relive my September 11 trauma but you keep interrupting—



Like that mind-numbing 2002 "anniversary" event, when you tried to wrap a flag around my head and suffocate me!



You rob from the poor and give to your pals like a parody of Robin Hood while distracting me with your damn oil war!



Then the recent election—  
shut my eyes and *concern*  
see the glowing bones of t

Trauma piles on trauma! Over half the country was already doubled over in pain after the *coup d'etat* in 2000...

RAMPAGING REPUBLICAN ELEPHANTS... DIMWITTED DEMOCRATIC DONKEYS... NO WONDER REAL AMERICANS DON'T BOTHER TO VOTE! THE TWO PARTY ANIMALS ARE BOTH 19TH-CENTURY DINOSAURS, INTERESTED ONLY IN THEIR OWN SURVIVAL, NOT OURS! WE NEED A THIRD PARTY THAT ACTUALLY REPRESENTS US... A NEW AND REVOLUTIONARY

# OSTRICH PARTY!

Now everyone's too scared, stupefied or demoralized to stop you—but us basket cases are gonna form a *Third Party*...

ORANGE ALERT!  
BEWARE OF COWBOY BOOTS!

Then,  
**WATCH OUT!**

JOIN YOUR FELLOW AMERICANS BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE...  
**RISE UP & STICK YOUR HEADS IN THE GROUND!**

REMEMBER THOSE DEAD AND CUDDLY...  
**POWER TWINS**

HELP—UNCLE SCREWLOOSE! HELP! FIRE!

**DIE! DING-  
ROTTED HEATHENS!**

¿COFFÉ NIX, UNK!  
DER HORNETS HASS  
FLOWN DER COOP!

HERE YOU GO, KIDDIES—  
DE ELIXIR OF DER GOTTS!

AH-HAH! HERE ISS VUN UGLY  
BUGGER VOT DON'T FLY!!  
NOW ISS **WAR!**

IRAKNID

G\*!! DOD-GASTED  
PESKY HORNETS!

YIKE! DER HORNETS  
ISS COMINK AGAIN!

UND DEY ISS  
MADDER NOW  
DEN EFFER!

HAH!  
VENGEANCE!

HA! STOOPID BUGGER!  
AGAIN DOSE NOO YORK  
ALECKERS, UND SEE IF I



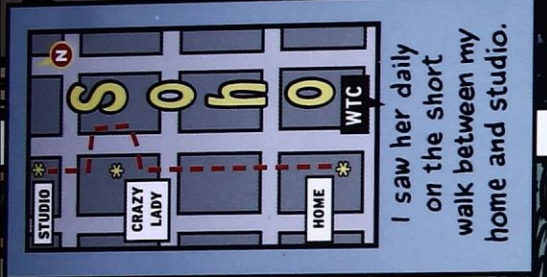
He keeps falling through the holes in his head, though he no longer knows which holes were made by Arab terrorists way back in 2001, and which ones were *always* there...



But in the economic dislocation that has followed since that day, he has witnessed lots of people landing in the streets of Manhattan.



Even during the Gitanian years, when the homeless all magically "disappeared," I had my Crazy Lady...



She spent her days reorganizing the neighborhood garbage she scavenged incoherently cursing



I always had to brace myself to pass her gauntlet of incoherent invective.



HAZARD! HAZARD! TOXIC! AND POISON!

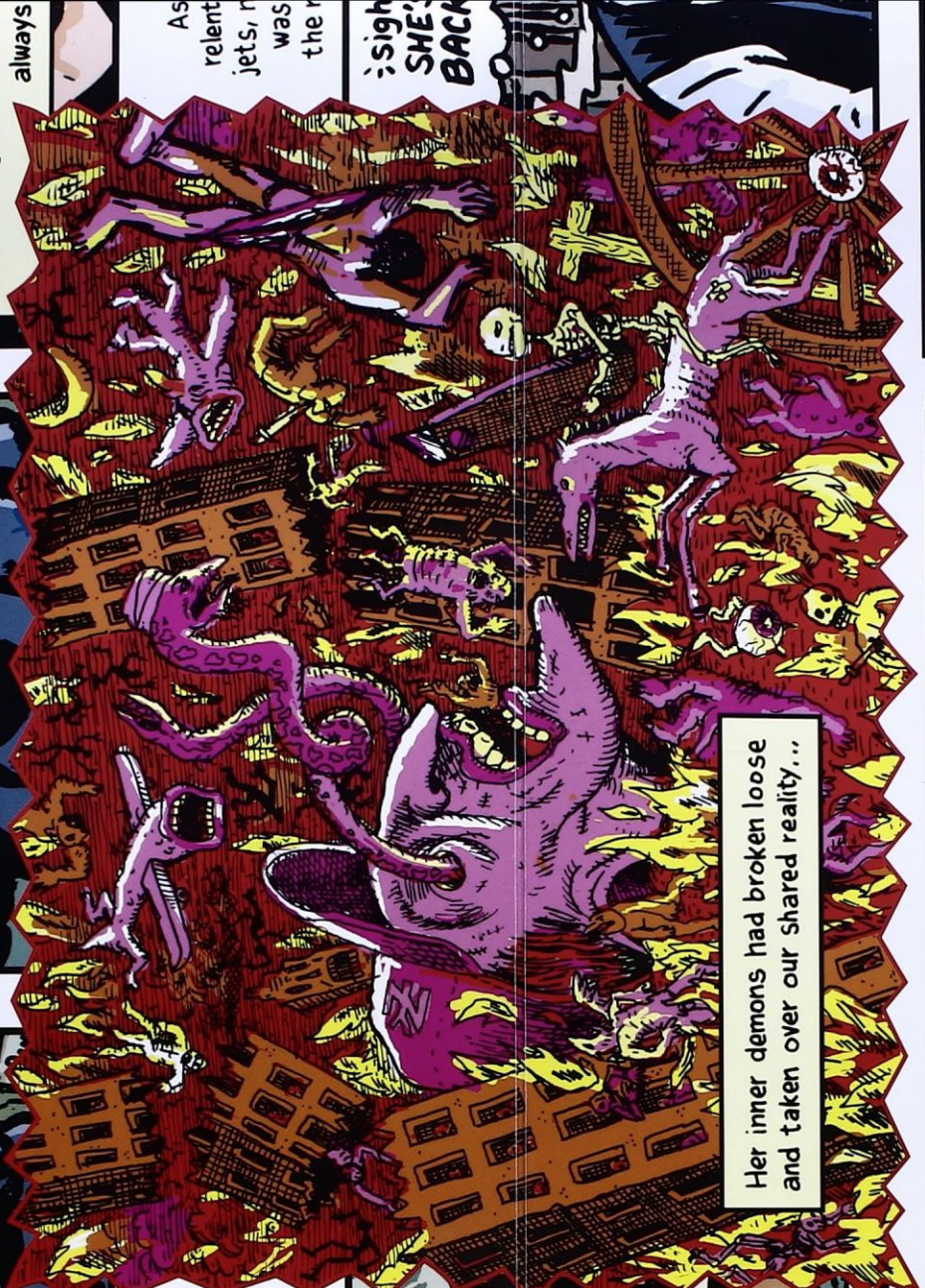


I eventually realized she was hurling antisemitic epithets at me in Russian.



POSHLIZHID! DAT BY ZHIRINOVSKY VOLYU!

...until the afternoon of 9/11. After we finally got home I staggered through the desolate streets to my studio...



Her inner demons had broken loose and taken over our shared reality...



HEY- SHE'S GONE!

I braced myself for her usual abuse, but everything had changed after September 11!



YOU DAMN KIKES- YOU DID IT!

Now she was cursing me in *ENGLISH*!



DIRTY JEW! WE'LL HANG YOU FROM THE LAMP POSTS, ONE BY ONE!



YOU HEAR ME, ONE BY ONE!

I guess I was more on usual that day. I turned

DAMN IT, LADY! IF YOU DON'T STOP BLAMING EVERYTHING ON THE JEWS, PEOPLE ARE GONNA THINK YOU'RE *CRAZY*!



THEN J ASHCR PULLED HIS BUI AND SHOT ME OUT WINDOW HUS FELL OF SWE

She avoided me after that... and now that the neighborhood is getting more crowded with homeless riffraff, she seems to have moved on.



nostalgic about his near-death experience back in September 01.

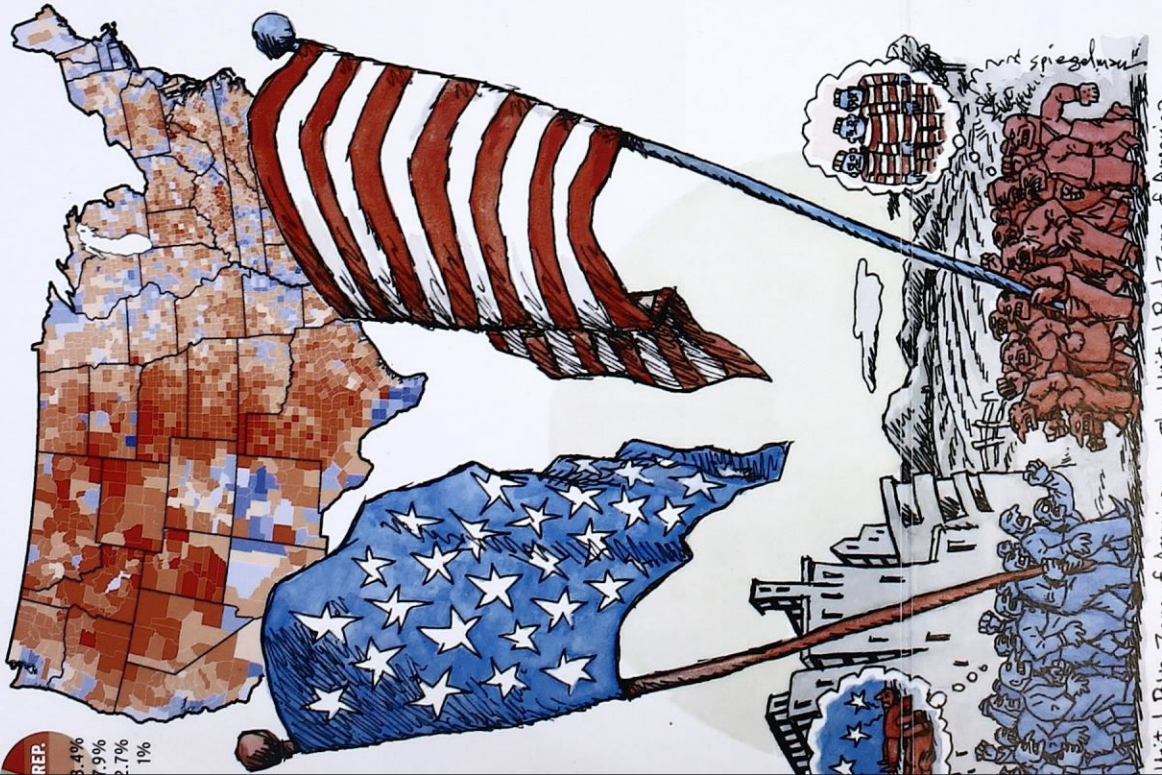
Nothin' like the end of the world to help bring folks together...

provincial American flags have to sprout out of the embers of Ground Zero?

HOMELAND SECURITY ADVISORY: **ORANGE ALERT!**  
HIGH RISK OF TERRORIST ATTACK

UNDER -DA- I CAN'T  
HOMELAND SECURITY ADVISORY: **RED ALERT!**  
SEVERE RISK OF TERRORIST ATTACK

Stars & stripes are a symbol of unity that many people see as a war banner. The detailed county-by-county map of the 2000 election—the one that put the loser in office—made it clear that we're actually a nation UNDER TWO FLAGS!



He's barely ever *been* in the Red Zone where the 44% of Americans who don't believe in Evolution tend to gather. Even when he visited "Republican" states he usually ended up in the one county that was at least Light Blue...



He hardly knows anyone who supports the war and no one who voted for that creature in the White House. The state he lives in is the state of alienation, down in the dumps in the dark indigo heart of the Blue Zone.

# IN THE SHADOW OF NO TOWN

MY 11-YEAR-OLD SON WOKE UP DREAMING HE WAS IN BAGHDAD AND BOMBS WERE FALLING ON HIM."











In the Shadow of No Towers

SOMEONE CAME UP  
FROM BEHIND ME AND  
PULLED OUT A KNIFE!

A black and white cartoon illustration. In the center, a woman with short dark hair, wearing a dark top and a dark skirt, looks startled with wide eyes and an open mouth. She is surrounded by a crowd of people, mostly men, who are looking towards her. One man in the foreground is looking up at her. The background is filled with more people, some of whom are holding what appear to be knives or weapons. The overall style is a simple, expressive line drawing. On the left side, there is a vertical line of text: "SOMEONE CAME UP FROM BEHIND ME AND PULLED OUT A KNIFE!".

A black and white illustration of a group of people in a line, rendered in a stylized, blocky manner. The figures are arranged in a queue, with some looking forward and others looking back. The style is reminiscent of mid-20th-century graphic design or propaganda art.

...MAYBE I REALLY *WANT* THE WORLD TO END,  
TO VINDICATE THE FEARS I FELT BACK ON 9/11!  
MAYBE IT'S JUST *MY* LITTLE WORLD THAT  
ENDED.. BUT THEN I GLANCE AT THE NEWS  
AND THERE'S ABSOLUTELY NO DOUBT...

...THE SKY IS FALLING

ZAZOU, OUR 17 YEAR OLD CAT, DIED RECENTLY."  
WE ADOPTED THIS L'il GUY 'CUZ HE LOOKS A BIT LIKE HIM!

SOLACE LEFT!... ZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZZ

9



Nothing like commemorating an event to help you forget it.

September 11, 2001, was a *memento mori*, an end to Civilization As We Knew It. By 2003, Genuine Awe has been reduced to the mere "Shock and Awe" of linguistic strutting.

## HAPLESS HOOLIGAN

HEY, LOOK IT  
THIS FAX!

AND TOM BROKAW  
WANTS **YOU** IN A  
COLLAGE OF INTER-  
VIEWS WITH TYPICAL  
NEW YORKERS.

NOTE: THOUGH HAPPY HOOLIGAN IS A FICTIONAL CHARACTER BORROWED FROM THE FIRST SUNDAY COMICS, THE FOLLOWING INTERVIEW IS 100% NONFICTION.

HERE WE GO: "MY FAVORITE AMERICAN FOOD IS..."

WHA?!

PARIS, FRANCE!

**SIGH. "THE GREAT-  
EST THING ABOUT  
AMERICA IS—"**

**I CAN STILL VIVIDLY  
REMEMBER THE HORRORS  
OF GROUND ZERO ON  
SEPTEMBER 11... 2002!**

I WAS AN **EYEWITNESS** TO  
THE BOMBARDMENT OF  
KITSCH ON SALE THAT DAY...  
AND I ALMOST BECAME A  
PARTICIPANT!

NBC IS BROADCASTING A 9/11 "CONCERT FOR AMERICA" FROM WASHINGTON D.C.

BUSH AND LAURA  
WILL BE SPEAKING;  
PLACIDO DOMINGO  
IS CONNA BEREFORM

THIS SEZ THEY'LL  
ASK ME STUFF LIKE  
"WHO'S MY FAVORITE  
AMERICAN HERO!"

I DON'T EVEN BELIEVE IN HEROES!

EXACTLY! ...YOUR POINT OF VIEW NEVER GETS ON NETWORK TV!

SO - UM-  
WHERE'S  
TOM  
BROKAW?  
WE SPLICE HIM IN  
LATER. I'LL JUST  
START A PHRASE,  
YOU FINISH IT, OK?

OF COURSE  
NOT. NOW  
SMILE INTO  
THE LIGHTS...

WAIT! IS IT  
ALRIGHT IF I  
SMOKE?

UMM...MY FAVORITE  
AMERICAN FOOD IS...  
SHRIMP PAD THAI!

DON'T WORRY—WE CAN  
EDIT THAT OUT LATER... "THE  
PLACE IN AMERICA WHERE  
I FEEL MOST AMERICAN IS—"

...UH, THAT AS LONG AS YOU'RE NOT AN ARAB YOU'RE ALLOWED TO THINK AMERICA'S NOT ALWAYS SO GREAT!

RATS! I SHOULD'VE SAID  
"I SHOULD'VE SAID I SHOULD'VE SAID"

On 9/11/01  
time stopped.

BY 9/12/01 CLOCKS  
BEGAN TO TICK AGAIN."

STILL, EVEN ANXIOUS NEW YORKERS EVENTUALLY RUN OUT OF ADRENALINE AND—

...YOU GO  
THINKING THAT  
I'VE COPIED

**"THE UNMENTIONABLE ODOUR OF DEATH OFFENDS THE SEPTEMBER NIGHT"  
—W.H. AUDEN. "SEPTEMBER 1, 1939"**

Right after 9/11/01, while waiting for some other terrorist shoe to drop, many found comfort in poetry. Others searched for solace in old newspaper comics. On 9/11/03 "the unmentionable odour of death" still offends as we commemorate two years of squandered chances to bring the community of nations together...

And September '04? Cowboy boots d

The Towers have  
come to loom far  
larger than life...

but they seem  
to get smaller  
every day..."





—In the Shadow  
of No Towers, #10

# The Comic Supplement

POETRY readings seemed to be as frequent as the sound of police sirens in the wake of September 11. Workers needed poetry to soothe their pain, culture to fill the void in a wounded civilization. I have heard W.H. Auden's "Night of the September 11, 1939" a dozen times in the past, but my mind kept wandering and no solace in music or poetry either—it seemed too precious. The only culture that could get past my grief was the flood of my eyes and brain, anything other than images of towers were old comic strips. Unpretentious ephemera, a nostalgic dawn of the 20th century, that they were made with skill and verve but never in the newspaper gave any; they were just right for the world moment.



**"The blast that disintegrated those Lower Manhattan towers also disinterred the ghosts of some Sunday supplement stars born on nearby Park Row. They came back to haunt one denizen of the neighborhood, addled by all that's happened since."** —In the Shadow of No Towers, #8

hundred years and two blocks away from Joseph Pulitzer and William Randolph Hearst, twin titans of modern journalism, gave the newspaper comic strip as a by-product of the circulation war (a competition that led to the demise of their papers). It was public enemy number one when their papers inflamed public opinion over what may well have been the accidental sinking of an American ship in Cuba. Their distaste for the Spanish-American War—their first colonialist adventure—would have made them proud. Their sensationalism was the lifeblood of Journalism and its emblem was the Yellow Kid, America's first newspaper cartoon star.

ded to edify the *New York World's* often immigrant readership with full-color illustrations of the great masterpieces of world literature. It developed one of the first color newspaper supplements for this purpose. The garish and off-register illustrations didn't add to the task, but the technology of the time allowed for flat colors. So, in the first Sunday color cartoon supplement, the world and elbowed out the High Art of the masses.

our jaded 21st century eyeballs to gauge the Pulitzer's exuberant splashes of color and gray type, but it was a Big Deal back then as well as figuratively—a 17"x23" (on the nickel paper). One recurring feature was Outcault's *HOGAN'S ALLEY* [PLATE II], a gang of street urchins in a Lower Manhattan ghetto. Like a cheerfully sociopathic Outcault drew scenes of political and

social commentary that teemed with brickbat violence, antic animal torture and the gleeful racism of the day. *Hogan's Alley* spotlighted one shanty-Irish gutter-snipe in a bright yellow nightshirt, a Yellow Kid, whose popularity made him not just the comics' first star but also America's first hot licensing property. The whole enterprise gave Hearst a bad case of supplement-envy and in 1896 he unveiled a rival cartoon section in his *New York Journal*, starring...



Outcault's Yellow Kid! The *Journal* touted its supplement as "Eight Pages of Polychromatic Effulgence That Makes the Rainbow Look Like a Lead Pipe!" Hearst's Kid appeared there as *McFadden's Row of Flats*, while the "original" Yellow Kid continued in Pulitzer's *Alley*, drawn by George Luks (later a noted painter of the Ash Can School), and twin Kids towered over the New York skyline.

When Dirks fled Hearst for Pulitzer in 1914, he continued his strip as *The Captain and the Kids*, while the original twins were masterfully cloned for Hearst by Harold Knerr, who drew the strip for decades under its original title. At the height of WWI's jingoistic fever, Knerr's characters were briefly rechristened *The Shenanigan Kids*, Mike and Alek, foreshadowing the recent American experiment in vindictive euphemism that brought us "Freedom Fries." (Dirks' kids lost their accents during the war and tried to pass for Dutch.) In any case, the little terrorists may well be immortal, still limping along at 107 in a few 21st century newspapers.

The Katzies inspired a gaggle of direct imitations and offshoots as well as spawning an entire medium. In one bland permutation, "Bunny" Schultze's *Foxy Grandpa* consistently foiled his two grandkids—marginally more socialized pranksters than Hans and Fritz—and made the comic supplement less anxiety-provoking for adults disturbed at seeing grown-ups regularly blown up. On one *GLORIOUS FOURTH OF JULY* in 1902 [PLATE IV] four cartoonists trapped in Hearst's bullpen collaborated to show Schultze's kids outdone by Dirks' Hans and Fritz: they dynamite Grandpa's patriotic reading of the Declaration of Independence. Injured in the explosion, Alphonse, one of the two pathologically polite Frenchmen created by Frederick Opper, explains to Gaston: "I detest the Fourth of July!" I tell you, some of those century-old crumbling newspaper pages seem like they were

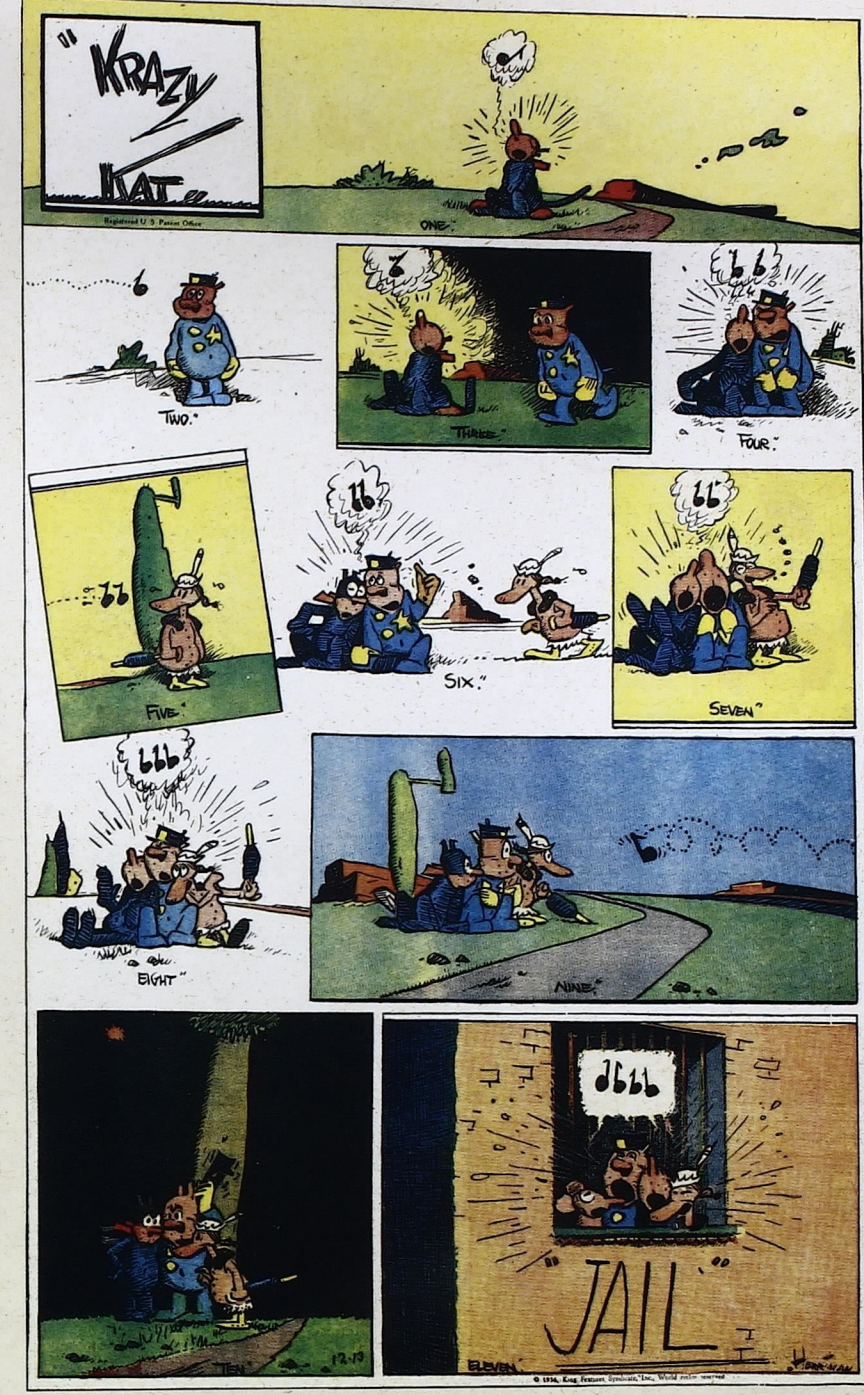
emerging language of comics and served up a memorable cast of slapstick characters. The most unforgettable of his now almost forgotten strips was *HAPPY HOOLIGAN* [PLATE V], a Chaplinesque victim *avant le lettre*, whose tin-can hat was once as iconic as Chaplin's Derby. On August 27, 1911, the hapless hobo, described by Opper as "Misfortune's favorite son," trades his tin can in for a turban to become Abdullah Hooligan, a dark-skinned circus clown who provokes his camel and gets tossed into... a tower of acrobats!

Hiring the highly respected Opper was a preemptive act on Hearst's part, designed to stave off the charges of vulgarity, violence and illiteracy that began to be leveled at the new comic supplements a second or two after they were born. Their cardinal sin was that they were *Sunday* supplements—the day kids ought to be in Sunday school studying the Bible, not yukking it up with semiliterate full-color lessons in mayhem. Still, the perpetual tug of war between vulgar and genteel culture in America has often been a fruitful one—generating New Orleans whoremongering jazz on the one hand and Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* on the other.

The *Chicago Tribune*, for example, launched Lyonel Feininger's *KINDER KIDS* in 1906 [PLATE I] to appeal to its upscale German immigrant readers as a sophisticated antidote to the coarse Katzenjammers. Feininger's visually poetic formal concerns collided comically with the fishwrap disposability of newsprint, but his unamused editors pulled the plug on the project a few months later. The cartoonist, a New Yorker who had emigrated to Germany at sixteen and returned to safe harbor in America in 1937, became a celebrated second-generation cubist, one of the Bauhaus boys, but his handful of Sunday pages—testing the uncharted waters between the high and low arts, between European and American graphic traditions—remains his greatest aesthetic triumph.

The first decade of comics was the medium's Year Zero, that moment of open-ended possibility and giddy disorientation that inevitably gave way to the constraints that came as the form defined itself. One of the most exhilarating anomalies of that topsyturvy moment was Gustave Verbeck's short-lived *UPSIDE DOWNS OF LITTLE LADY LOVEKINS AND OLD MAN MUFFAROO* [PLATE III]. A frighteningly ingenious experiment in compression, the first half of these strips magically becomes the second half when the reader turns the page 180 degrees. Twin

that while an eccentric artist like Verbeck could turn that structure on its head, Winsor McCay, the towering genius of the first decade of comics, drew monumental structures designed to last. A signifi-



cant early innovator of the animated cartoon form as well as comics, McCay excelled in giving shape to our dream lives, as concrete in his renderings as Feininger was abstract. In his instantly popular *LITTLE NEMO IN SLUMBERLAND* [PLATE VI], which began in the *New York Herald* at the end of 1905, we've traveled a long way from Hogan's Alley. Nemo, a young boy from a well-heeled family, journeyed nightly to a dreamland of baroque architecture and circus pageantry to hang out with King Morpheus' daughter before waking up, usually distressed, in the last small panel. Changes in scale (of panels as well as everything else), figures flying and falling and the real-world fantasy architecture of McCay's beloved New York City dominated the stunning weekly pages.

In our September 29, 1907, example an outsized Nemo and his companion, a Jungle Imp, are lost in the canyons of Lower Manhattan, and make their way to the South Street piers along the East River. A

Nemo and the funnies' move to the bourgeois suburbs in an early strip of his own, *Nibsy the Newsboy*, about a streetwise slum kid who gets dragged off to "Funny Fairyland." McManus then

resumed his own long-term project: bringing sitcom domestic comedy to the comics, an undertaking that culminated in his classic *BRINGING UP FATHER* [PLATE VII]. Usually focused on marital and class strife—Maggie, a *nouveau riche* shrew, tries to drag her lottery-winning prole of a husband, Jiggs, up the social ladder—this episode takes place in a dreamland where cartoon characters can keep towers from tumbling.

But it was *KRAZY KAT* that hit me hardest. George Herriman's *Kat-Pupp-Mouse* love triangle has been universally celebrated as the jewel in the dunce cap of my art form; and for once, I'm comfortable going with the crowd, one that has included cultural arbiters like e. e. cummings and Umberto Eco. There have been many "one-note" strips in the history of comics—Winsor McCay's short-lived *Little Sammy Sneeze*, about a tyke whose powerful sneezes knock over everything from a pushcart to, eventually, a whole city, comes to mind—but never anything like *Krazy Kat*: the lyrical and idiosyncratic Deco-doodle-style strip featured a Kat who loves getting "beamed by a brick" tossed almost daily by a malevolent mouse, Ignatz, who is then chased by one Offissa Pupp (a bulldog quietly in love with the Kat) who tosses the miscreant into a jail made of... bricks!

The strip's admirers could and did read Herriman's daily variations as anything from political allegory (Mouse as Anarchist, Kop as Fascist, Kat as the elusive spirit of Democracy) to psychosexual drama (Mouse as Ego, Kop as Superego and Kat as untrammelled Id). But the ineffable beauty of *Krazy Kat* was that it was simply about a Kat getting konked with a brick. It presented an open-ended metaphor that could contain *all* stories simultaneously; and after September 11, Ignatz started looking a lot like Osama Bin Laden to me!

One silent page from 1936 shows Krazy caterwauling in the ever-shifting desert-scape of Coconino County. Kat is joined by Kop for a duet, then by Mrs. Kwak Wak for a trio. A forlorn note tumbles into the panel and, after conferring, they all realize that they have no choice but to join Ignatz in his cell for a quartet. This is deep stuff, and after the attack it hit me like a ton of bricks: it proposed that since every Eden has its snake, one must somehow learn to live in harmony with that snake! I'm still working on it.





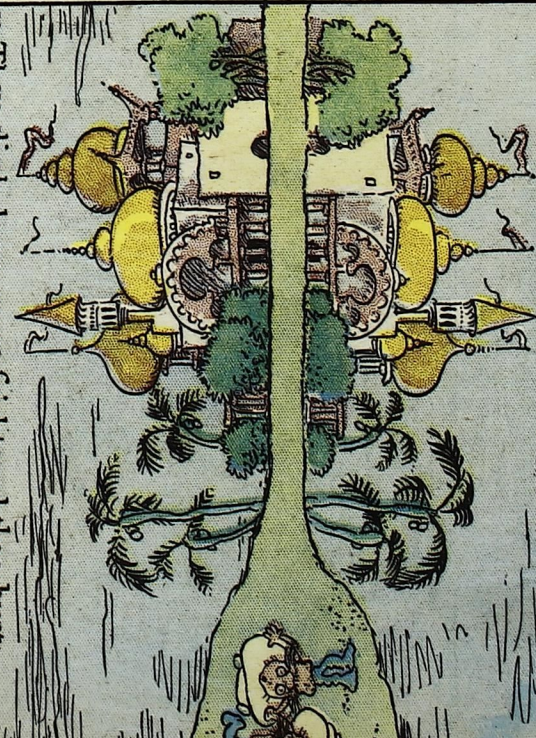




PLATE II

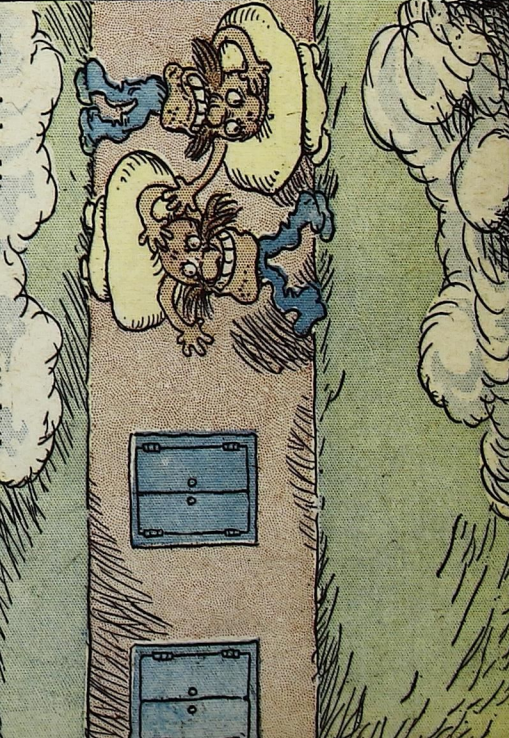
# THE UPSIDE-DOWNS OF LITTLE LADY LOVEKINS AND OLD MAN MUTTFA • THE FAIRY PALACE.

12. They climb down, more frightened than hurt, and run away. Lovekins resolving never to give way to idle curiosity again.



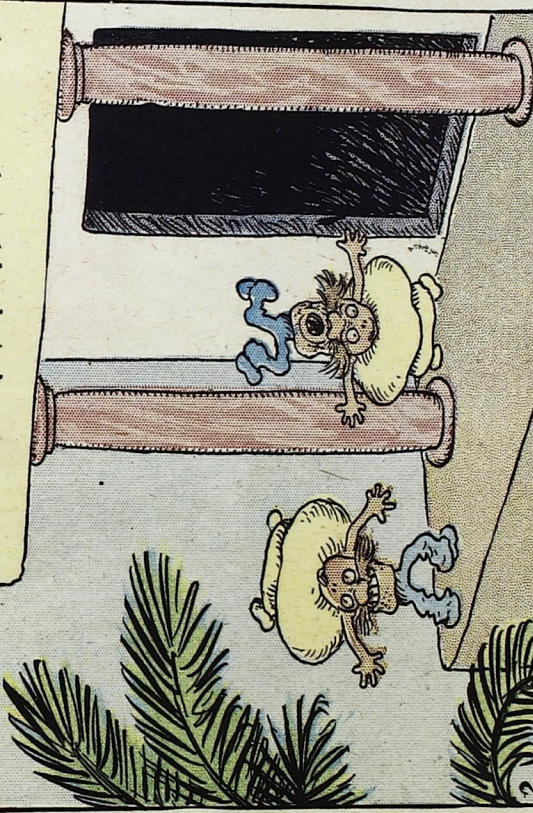
13. One day Lovekins and Muffaroo come to a beautiful lake, and on its shores they see a lovely palace, toward which they make their way.

14. The hobgoblins all at once slip back into their closet for a terrible roaring and Muffaroo trembles.



15. Then he vanishes, and pretty soon they find the two mysterious closets. Muffaroo remembers the Genies' words.

16. And tosses them right through the door into the branches of a palm-tree outside.



17. "Let us go in!" cries little Lady Lovekins, and as the big door stands wide open, in they go!

18. Instantly a horde of handsome hobgoblins, to appear a little before they take them up in their arms, and Muffaroo were they mean they would have taken them up in their arms.



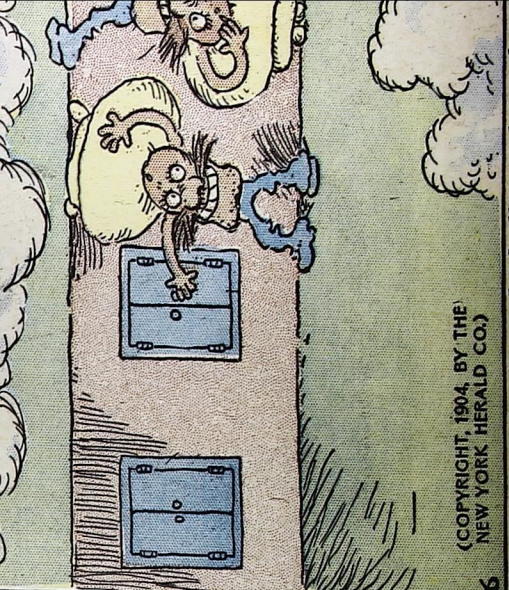
19. So he opens only the righthand door, and behold! out come a lot of funny little fairies, singing sweet songs to them. "How do you do, fairies!" Muffaroo calls out

PLATE III



20. Inside, a great Genie floats up to them in a cloud of smoke. "You will find two mysterious closets," says he. "You may open, but the lefthand one, open not, or you will be sorry for it."

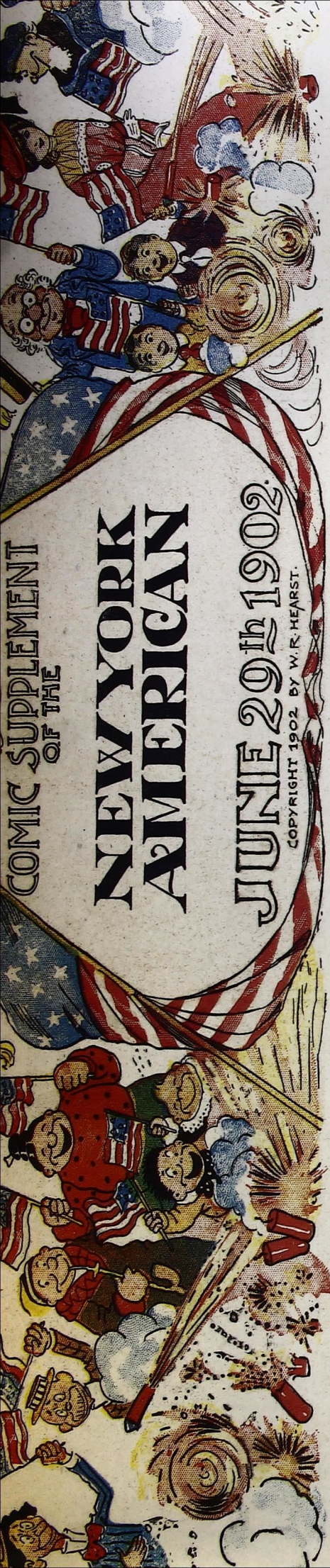
21. The Genie is turned, Lovekins quietly puts her hand on the lefthand side and says, "I am the Genie of the lefthand side and I am the Genie of the righthand side."



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22. The fairies go back, and Muffaroo closes the door. "I wonder what is in the other closet," says Lovekins. "Ah, that we shall never know!" replies Old Man Muffaroo.

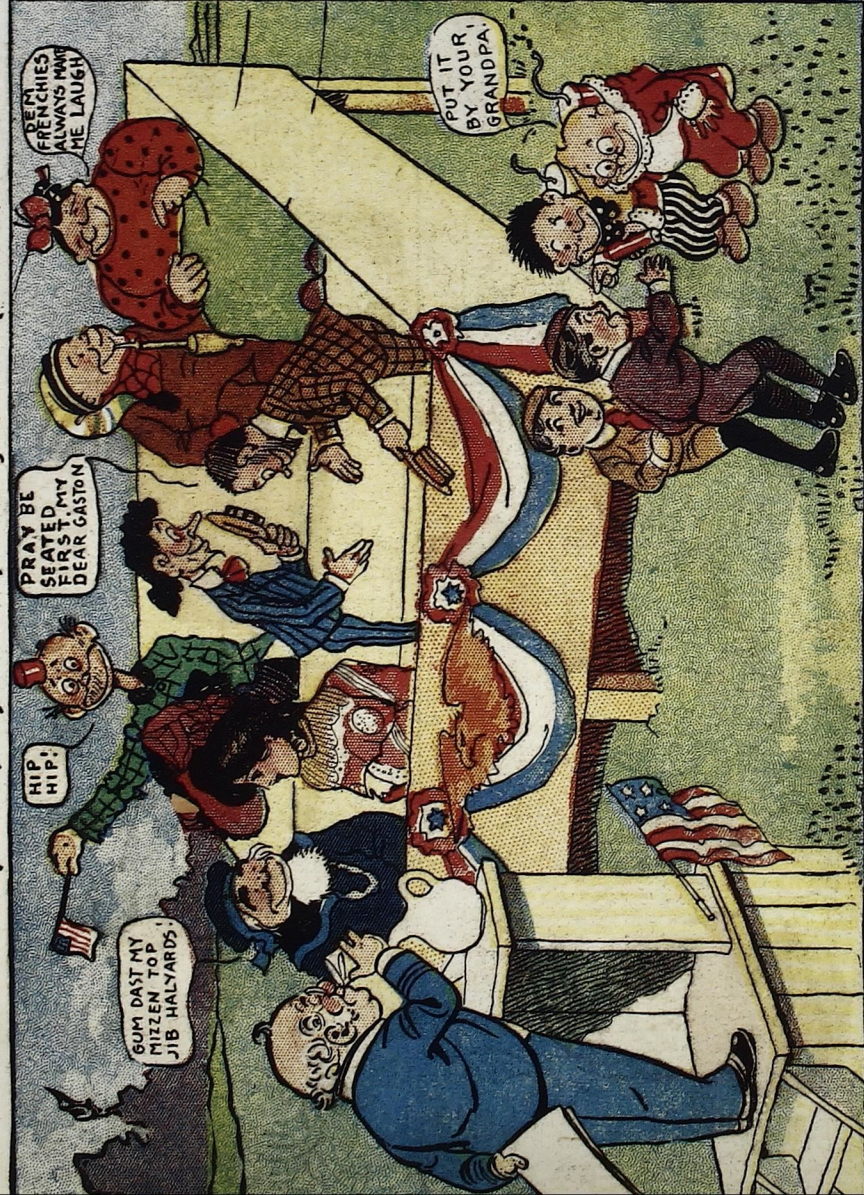




# The Glorious Fourth of July!

How Foxy Grandpa Began to Read the Declaration of Independence, and How He Was Interrupted

COPYRIGHT 1902







# Is This Abdullah, the Arab Chief?

No, Gwendollin, It's Our Old Friend Happy Hooligan!

1

HAPPY THE ARAB CHIEF HAS GOT THE MEASLES. YOU'LL HAVE TO RIDE THE CAMEL AROUND THE RING TO-DAY. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS TO SIT STILL AND KEEP SAYING "OLLA GALOLLA."

OFFICE OF JONES & MAMMOTH CIRCUS

THAT SOUTLY LISTEN'S LEASY

POPPE'S PATRON

2

HEY UNCLE HAPPY WE KNOW YOU'RE!

LOLLY JOLLY

3

HELLO! YOUSE KIDS MUSTN'T DISTOIB ME NOW!

4

5

6

IT'S ALL RIGHT! I AINT HOIT!

7

8

9

10

HOOLA BROS. WORLD'S CHAMPION ACROBATS

11

12

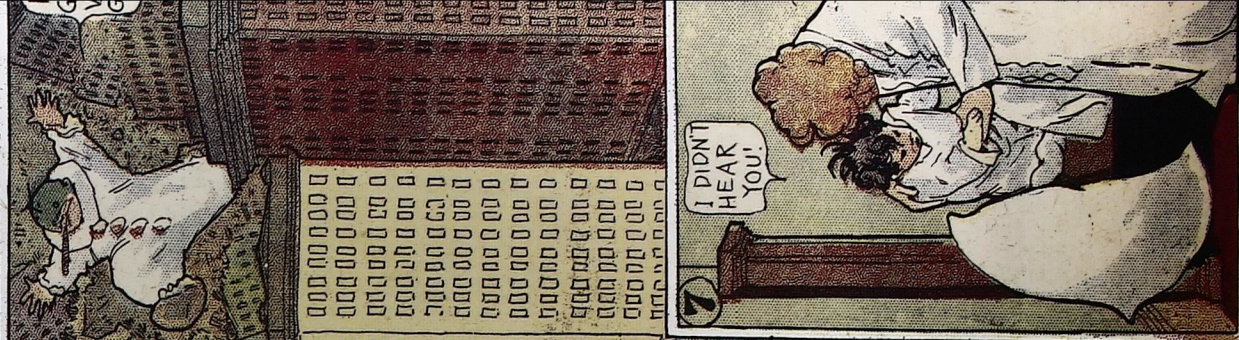
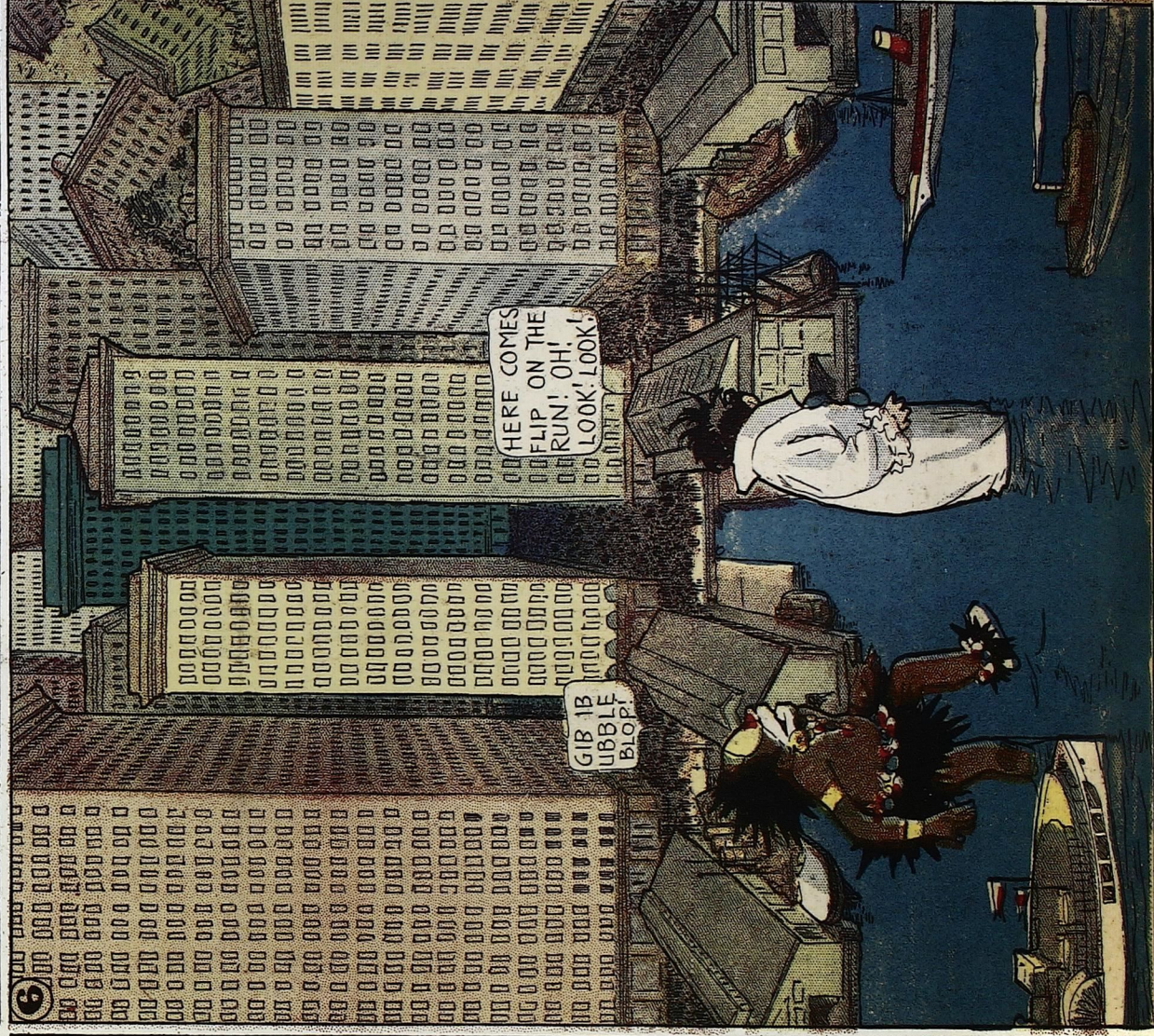
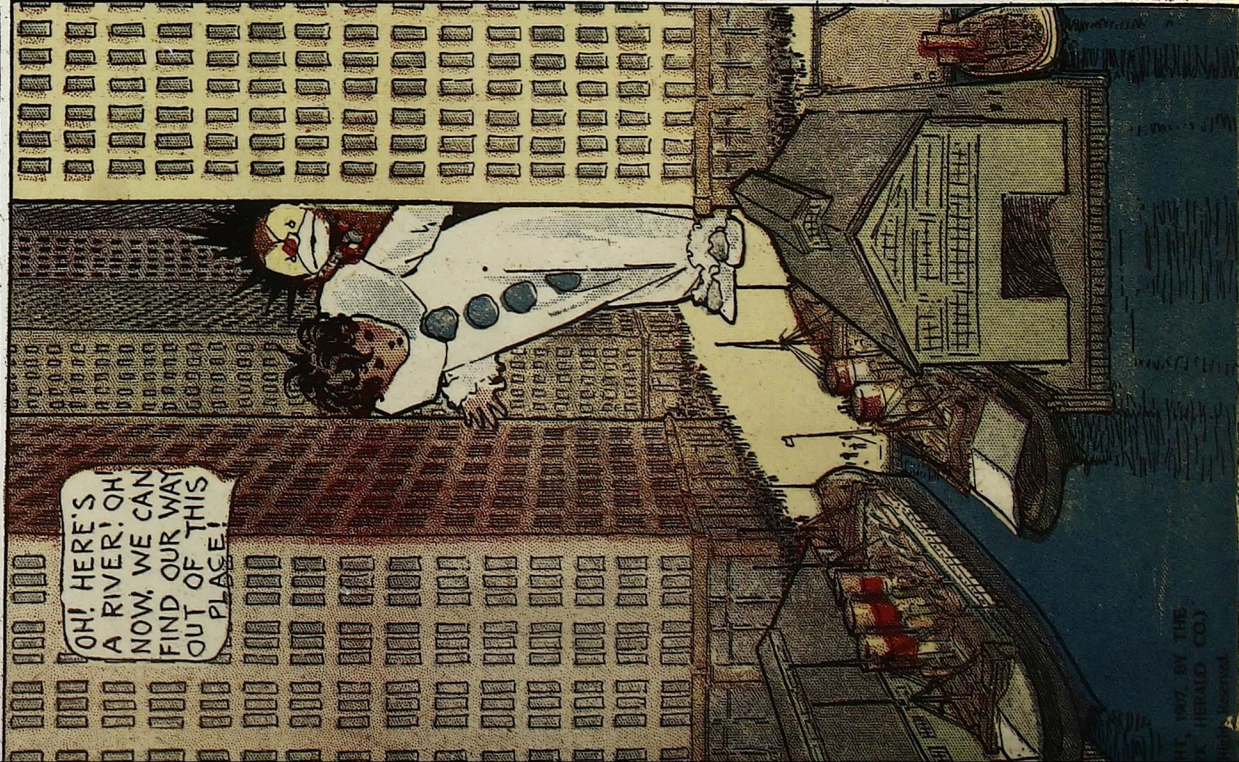
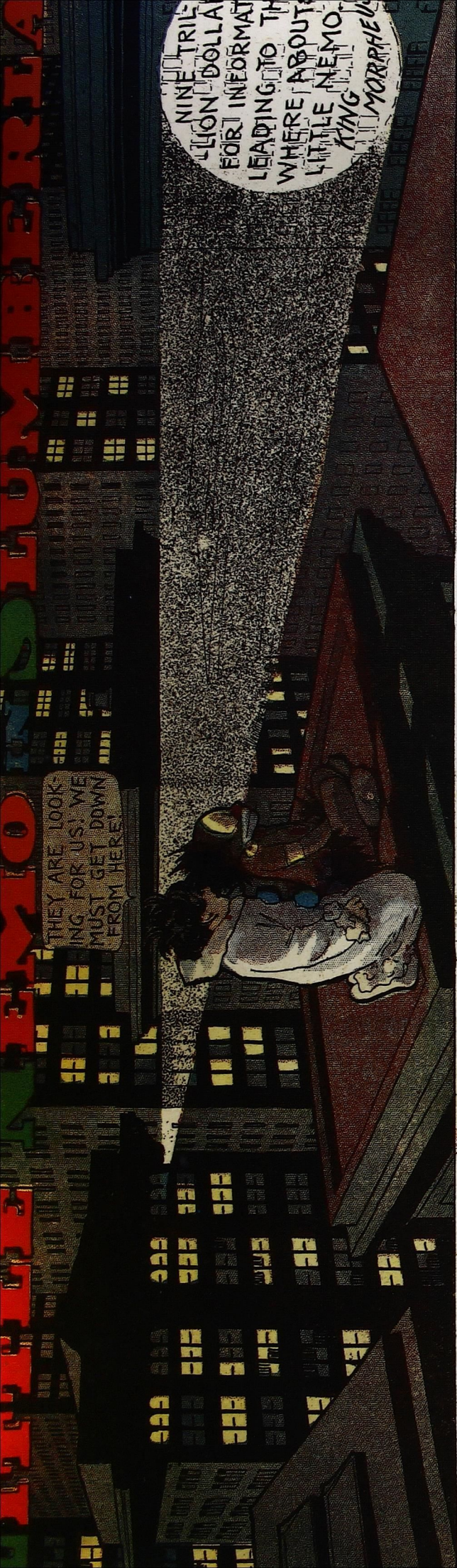
REMEMBER! YOU'RE UNDER OATH!

I NOW ASK YOU, AND I WANT YOU TO THINK CAREFULLY BEFORE ANSWERING, WHICH OF THESE MEN HIT YOU WITH A ONE THOUSAND POUND WEIGHT?

YOUSE SOIC









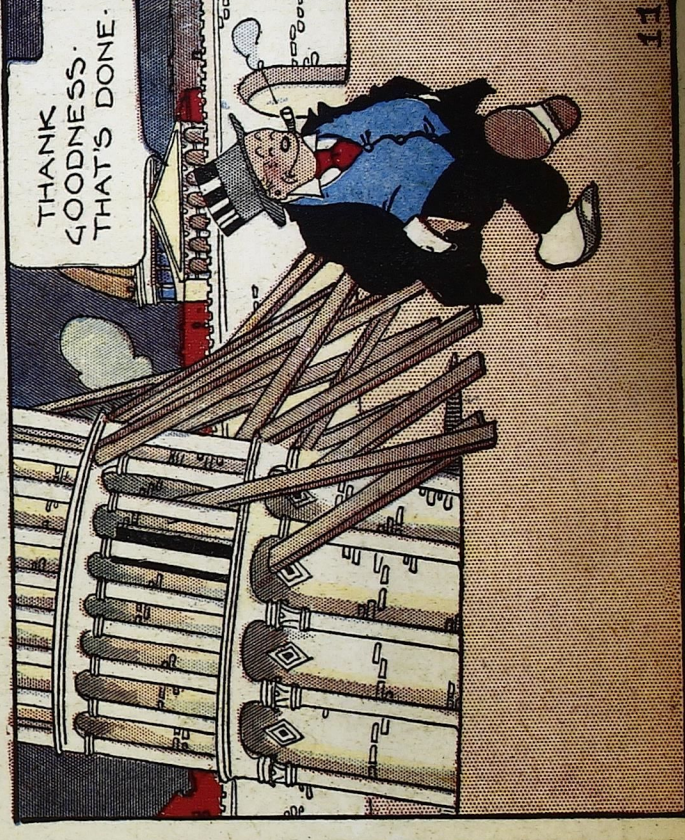
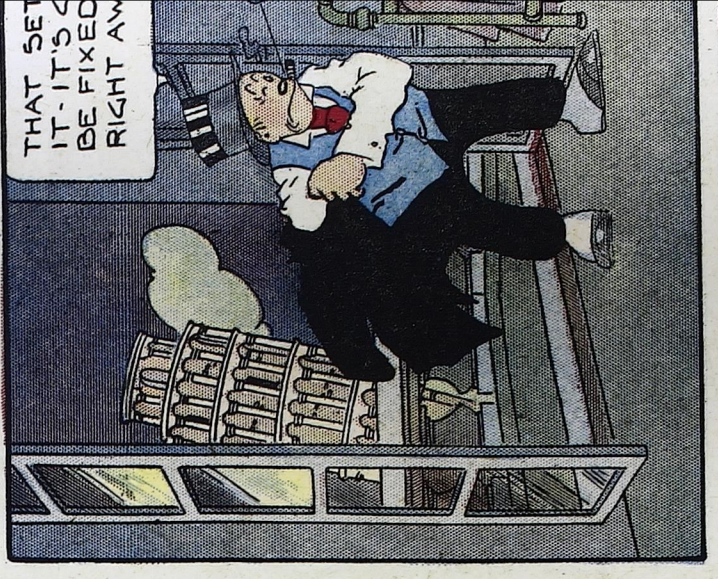
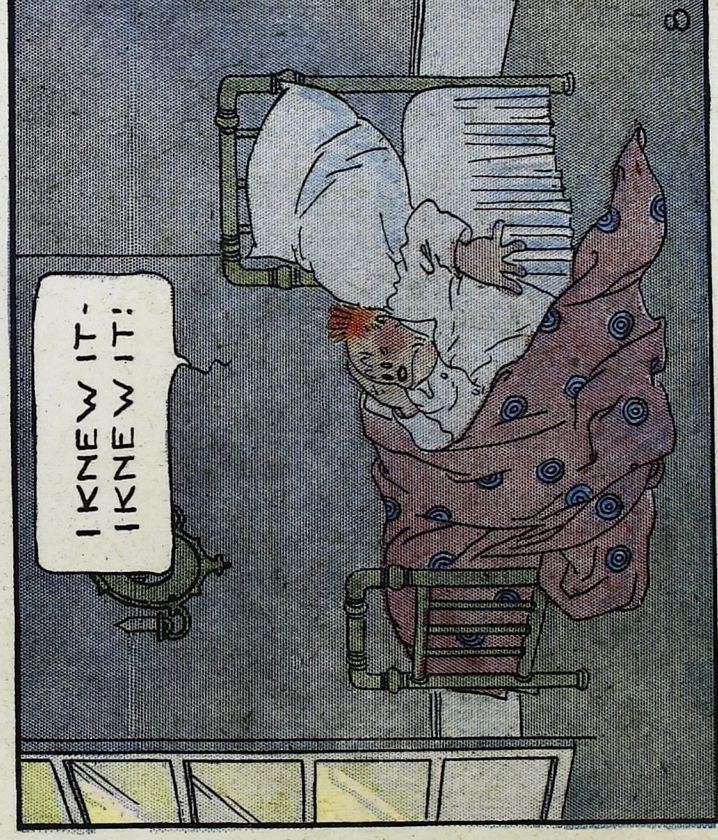
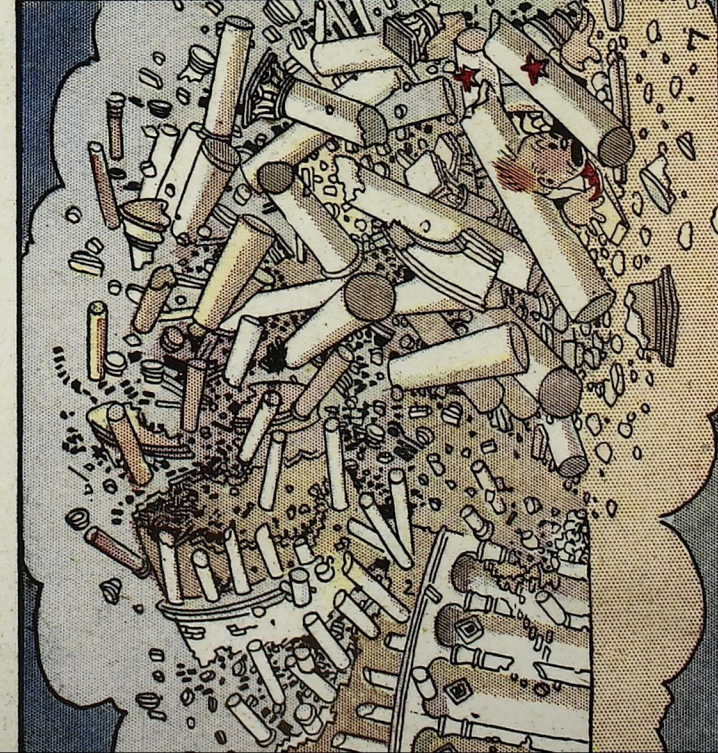
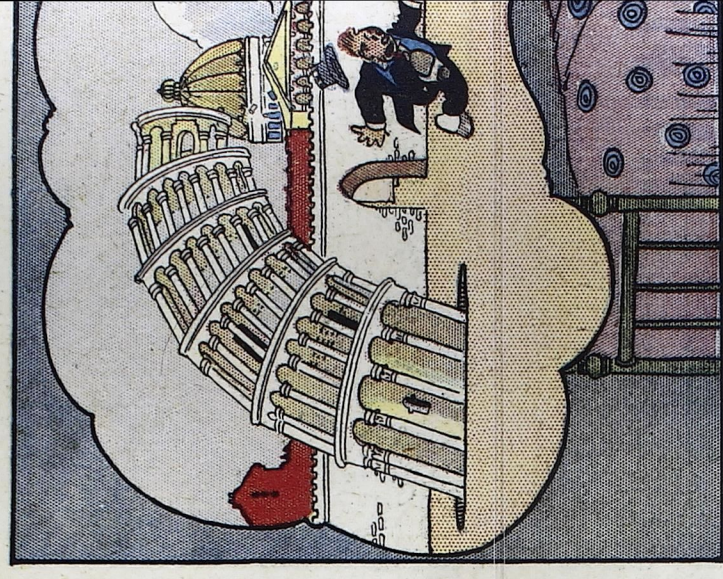
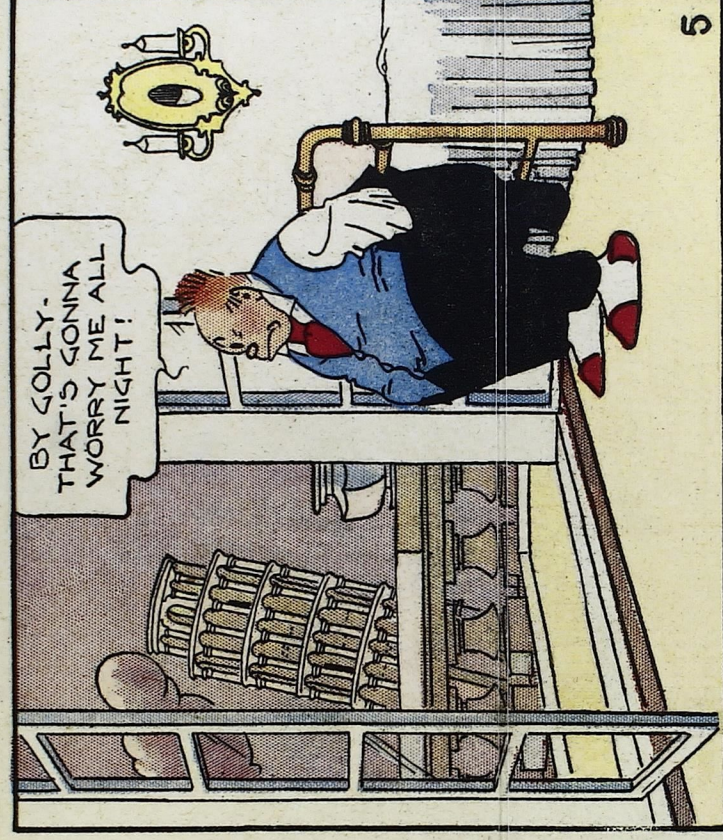
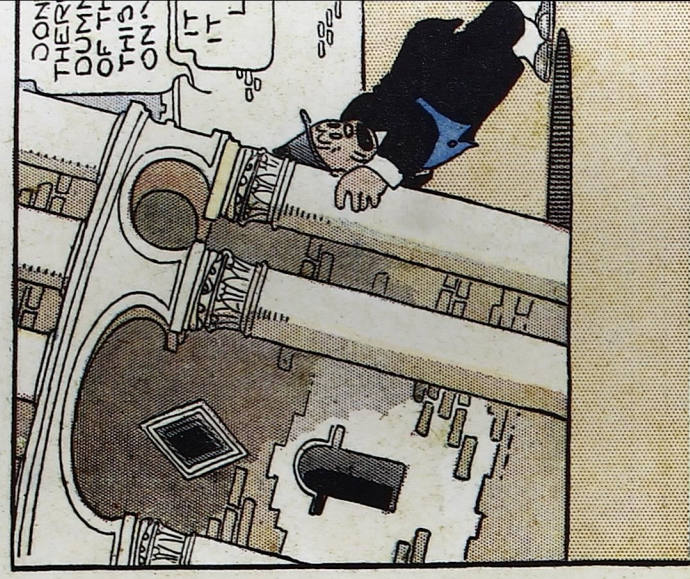
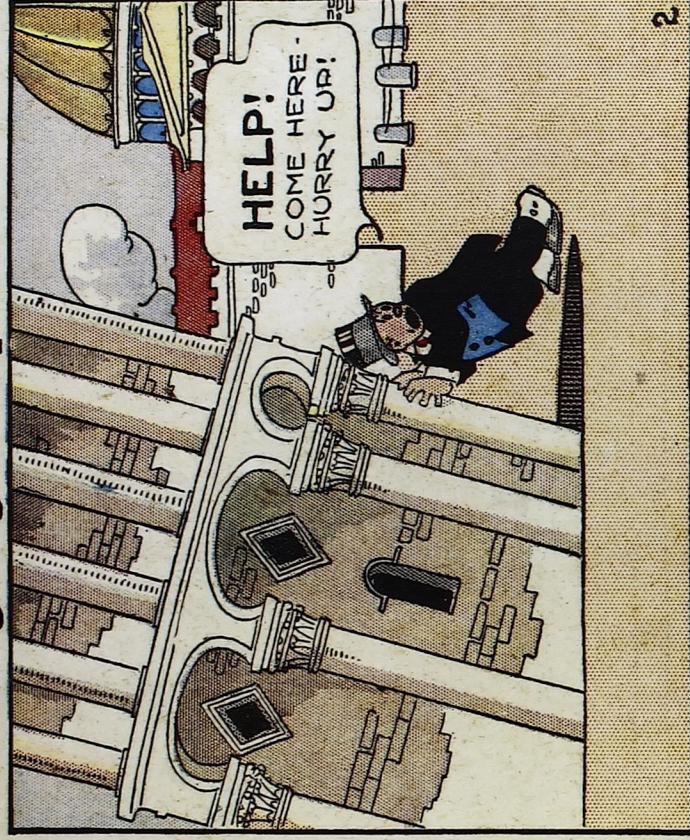
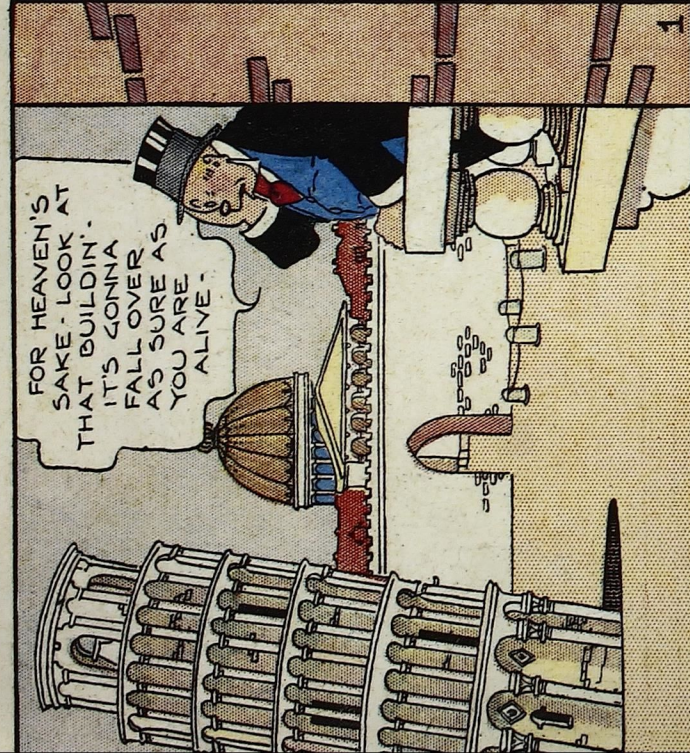
MOST VISIT  
GENOVA WHILE  
WE ARE IN  
ITALY.

TELEPHONE AN'  
SEE IF HE'S IN!

BEGIN EACH DAY WITH  
"BRINGING UP FATHER"  
APPEARS EVERY  
IN THE NEW YORK AME

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## Bringing Up Father





# PRESIDENT'S WOUND WORSE

## "FIRE! THE WORLD TRADE CENTER IS ON FIRE!"

**EMMA GOLDMAN IN JAIL**  
CHARGED WITH CONSPIRACY  
Time 9/11/01  
Hijacked jets hit twin towers and hit Pentagon in day of terror  
Caught Hiding in a Chicago Flat and Taken to Police  
Warrant Is Live Images Make Viewers Witnesses to Horror  
NY Times 9/11/01

VEHEMENTLY DENIES THAT SHE INSPIRED CZOLGOSZ  
NY Times 9/11/01  
Anarchist Queen Declares She Will Stay in Jail and Then Only for a Moment  
tailed State's Attorney General  
the Last Two Months  
TALIBAN IN TEXAS FOR TALKS ON GAS PIPELINE  
THE 1,300KM PIPELINE WILL CARRY GAS ACROSS AFGHANISTAN'S HARSH TERRAIN  
BBC 12/4/97

WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE—BUSH CALLS FOR BIN LADEN'S HEAD  
NY Post 9/18/01  
THE AGE OF IRONY COMES TO AN END  
Time 9/24/01  
RADIO WARNS AFGHANS OVER FOOD PARCELS DO NOT CONFUSE THE CYLINDER-SHAPED BOMB WITH THE RECTANGULAR FOOD BAG  
BBC 10/28/01

STORY OF THE ARREST OF ANARCHIST QUEEN  
BIN LADEN USES 10 LOOKALIKES TO FOIL HUNT  
Reuters 11/17/01  
BIN LADEN'S VEGAS VIDEO! HIGH STAKES, HOOKERS AND HUMMUS  
Weekly World News 12/31/01

FORGET OSAMA, SAYS BUSH BUT LOOK OUT, SADDAM  
AP 3/14/02

INDEX TO ADVERTISEMENTS

# WAR IS HELL

(ON YOUR CIVIL LIBERTIES)

Time 11/15/01  
IN NY, TAKING A BREATH OF FEAR ILLNESSES BRING NEW DOUBTS ABOUT TOXIC EXPOSURE NEAR GROUND ZERO  
Wash. Post 1/8/02

NEW YORK CITY SMOKING BAN SMELLS SWEET TO NEW JERSEY BAR OWNERS  
Knight-Ridder/Tribune 2/2/03

TRAUMATIC MOMENTS END, BUT REMINDERS STILL LINGER  
NY Times 11/6/01  
THREE-QUARTERS OF AMERICANS SURVEYED SAID THEY FLEW FLAG AFTER SEPT. 11  
AP 7/3/02

MUSLIMS SAY THEY'RE AVOIDING JULY FOURTH EVENTS OUT OF FEAR OF BEING MISTAKEN FOR TERRORISTS  
AP 7/4/02  
PROHIBITED WEAPONS; ILICIT ARMS KEPT TILL EVE OF WAR, AN IRAQI SCIENTIST IS SAID TO ASSERT  
NY Times 4/21/03

BUSH, BLAIR AND THE "EUROWIMPS"  
Time 4/8/02  
PROTESTS; 1.5 MILLION DEMONSTRATORS IN CITIES ACROSS EUROPE OPPOSE A WAR AGAINST IRAQ  
NY Times 2/16/03

BUSH SWOOPS IN, LANDS ON CARRIER CALLS LIBERATION OF IRAQ BLOW AGAINST TERRORISM  
NY Daily News 5/2/03

# BEWARE THE BRIEFCASE BOMB

Time 12/3/03  
PENTAGON OPENS CRIMINAL INQUIRY OF HALLIBURTON PRICING  
NY Times 12/24/04  
NEW YORK TIMES IN SHOCK AS REPORTER'S LIES ARE UNCOVERED  
The Guardian 5/12/03

THE TRUTH WILL BE AS ELUSIVE AS SADDAM  
The Guardian 7/6/03  
MILLER TIME (AGAIN) THE NEW YORK TIMES OWES READERS AN EXPLANATION FOR JUDITH MILLER'S FAULTY WMD REPORTING  
Slate 2/12/04

WEAPONS OF MASS DISAPPEARANCE  
Time 6/09/03  
EDGY CITY MOVES TO ORANGE  
NY Post 12/23/03

SODA SPILL ON LOBBY FLOOR OF FBI CAUSES COMMOTION  
The Oklahoman 2/12/03

HOT OFF THE PRESSES: OLD NEWS! AFTER THE PAINFUL HEADLINES OF 9/11, DURING 2002 WE WANTED STORIES NICE AND STALE  
Time 12/30/02

A TERROR WARNING FOR N.Y. AND D.C. TERROR KINGPIN OSAMA BIN LADEN MAY BE PREPARING TO BOMB NEW YORK OR WASHINGTON  
NY Daily News 12/14/98

BRITNEY VIDEO

# FOR WORSE

Surgeons Remove Several Stitches Because of Slight Irritation Due to Presence of a Fragment of Mr. McKinley's Coat, Carried Into the Wound by the Bullet, but They De-are Patient's Condition Is Un- changed in All Important Particulars.  
PATIENT TAKES FOOD FOR THE FIRST TIME.  
Dr. McBurney Had Planned to Leave for New York Last Night, but He Postpones His De- parture and Takes Part in a Consultation of Surgeons that Lasts for Two Hours—Latest Operation Will Delay Healing of Wound.

LATEST OFFICIAL BULLETIN.  
MILBURN HOUSE, BUFFALO, Sept. 10.—10.30 P. M.—The condition of the President is unchanged in all IMPORTANT particulars. His temperature is 100.6; pulse, 114; respiration, 28.  
When the operation was done on Friday last it noted that the bullet had carried with it a short distance beneath the skin a fragment of the Presi- dent's coat. This foreign material was, of course removed, BUT A SLIGHT IRRITATION OF THE TISSUES WAS PRODUCED, THE EVIDENCE OF WHICH HAS APPEARED ONLY TO-NIGHT.  
It has been necessary on account of this slight disturbance to remove a few stitches and partially open the skin wound.  
This incident cannot give rise to other compli- cations, but it is communicated to the public, as the surgeons in attendance wish to make their bulletins entirely frank.  
In consequence of this separation of the edges of the surface wound the healing of the same will be somewhat delayed.  
The President is now well enough to begin to nourishment by the mouth in the form of pure beef juice.  
(Signed) P. H. RIXEY, M. D. MANN, ROSWELL PARK, HERMAN MYNTER, CHARLES MCBURNEY.  
GEORGE B. CORTELYOU, Secretary to the President.  
(Special to The World.)

BUFFALO, Sept. 10.—Midnight.—The bulletin issued at 10.30 P. M. printed above marks a most important development.  
It was known that something unusual had occurred when the custom- ary 9 o'clock bulletin did not make its appearance and the consultation of physicians continued. They remained at the Milburn house for an hour and a half, having decided to postpone his departure. It was announced that he may not leave Buffalo before Wednesday or Thursday.  
The physicians left the house they declared that no uneasiness was felt.  
STITCHES TAKEN OUT.  
Several of the stitches were simply taken out, they said, and after a thorough antiseptic washing of the inflamed tissues the wound was again sewn up.  
No anesthetics were used.  
Considerable delay was caused by the fact that a dressing desired by the surgeons was not in the house, and it was necessary to send for it. The first time the messenger returned he did not bring what was needed and was sent back.  
"NO OTHER COMPLICATIONS."  
The surgeons seek to allay all apprehension by the positive statement that this incident cannot give rise to OTHER complications. They say the only effect will be to slightly delay the healing of the wound.  
The bulletin added, reassuringly, that Mr. McKinley had been able to allow a little beef tea—the first time he has taken food in the normal way since he was shot.  
The President's brother, Abner McKinley, was in the house while the surgeons were at work. With him were Secretary of War Root, Secretary Cortelyou, John G. Milburn and Harry Hamlin, who has been entertaining Senator Hanna.  
In connection with to-night's developments it is explained that the re-opening of the outer wound did not affect the two interior wounds, one in front and one in back, from which the President is suffering.  
Both of these wounds it was added, are healing nicely.  
At 1 A. M. Secretary Cortelyou hurried over to the press tent with Mr. McKinley.

ART SPIEGELMAN IS THE CREATOR OF THE PULITZER PRIZING A SURVIVOR'S TALE. THE TWO-VOLUME WORK HAS BEEN TRANSLATED INTO EIGHTEEN LANGUAGES. IN 1980 HE AND HIS WIFE, FRANCOISE MURPHY, THE ACCLAIMED AND INFLUENTIAL MAGAZINE OF ART AND GRAPHICS, WHICH THEY CO-EDITED UNTIL 1991. FROM 1977 TO 1980 HE WAS A STAFF ARTIST AND WRITER FOR THE NEW YORKER. HIS POWERFUL BLACK-ON-BLACK 9/11 COVER A FEW DAYS AFTER THE ATTACKS ON MANHATTAN WITH HIS WIFE AND THEIR TWO CHILDREN, NADJA AND BENJAMIN.